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MEMOIRS

OF THE

QUEENS OF SPAIN.

MEMOIRS

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QUEENS OF SPAIN,

FROM THE

PERIOD OF THE CONQUEST OF THE GOTHS TO THE ACCESSION OF HER PRESENT MAJESTY ISABELLA II., WITH THE REMARKABLE EVENTS THAT OCCURRED DURING THEIR RESPECTIVE REIGNS, AND ANECDOTES OF THEIR SEVERAL COURTS.

BY

ANITA GEORGE.

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY

MISS JULIA PARDOE,

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIRS OF FRANCIS THE FIRST," "LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH AND THE COURT OF FRANCE," &c.

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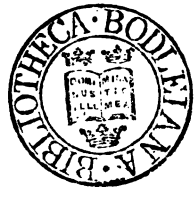

TO

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT, ESQ.

To no one can a Work on Spain be inscribed with greater propriety than to the Author of the "History of Ferdinand and Isabella;" and though with regret that it is not more worthy his acceptance, the Authoress avails herself of his permission, to offer him this testimony of admiration for his talents, and gratitude for his many kindnesses.

JUNE, 1850.

PREFACE.

EMINENT writers have given us Lives, Memoirs, and Histories of the sovereigns of France and England; but, without seeking to detract from the merit of works I do not pretend to equal, far less to excel, I will venture to remind the critical reader that theirs is a far easier task than mine. Few are aware of the labour, patience, and perseverance requisite to write history. To collect all the materials necessary for the undertaking, to select with discrimination and care from the heterogeneous mass, to unite the component but disjointed parts into one unbroken narrative, and finally, to present the result in a pleasing form to the reader, is a task far more arduous than they imagine, who view it in the light of a mere compilation. If these remarks apply to history in general, they certainly do so more especially to the annals of the sovereigns of Spain. England, from the reign of Athelstane, the grandson of Alfred, in 927, has acknowledged but one sovereign; and, from the close of the ninth century, we find no division of the French dominions into separate kingdoms; while, in Spain, it was not until the year 1515,

that the Spanish dominions became united under one ruler, having, for eight hundred years previous to that period, been divided into a number of petty kingdoms, governed by independent Princes, whose frequent wars, intermarriages, usurpation of their several dominions, and, above all, similitude of names, render the compilation of their annals a work of patience and labour.

While giving such details of the lives of the female sovereigns as the records of their times afford, I have endeavoured to maintain unbroken the connecting links between each reign, sketching the history of Spain from the time of the invasion of the Goths down to the present day. Of the earlier portion of that period, we possess but meagre, contradictory, and unsatisfactory records, and those disfigured by the exaggerations and fables of a superstitious age. Of many of the Queens, little save the name remains to rescue their memory from the sea of oblivion. Of others, again, we find even the existence disputed. But, as we approach the fourteenth century, the materials of the historian become gradually more copious, and the chronicles abound with well authenticated traits of the generosity, the romantic valour, the devoted loyalty for which the sons of chivalric Iberia have ever been so eminently distinguished.

I have not entered into a detailed account of sieges, battles, and treaties, which would have proved neither instructive nor entertaining, but have omitted none of the remarkable events that were connected with the subject, though sparing those unimportant facts that would have lengthened without adding to the utility of the work. I have given facts as I have found them, allowing the reader to put his own constructions upon each, without attempting to bias his judgment by the intrusion of my

own interpretations, conjectures, and comments. No character is so black, none so fair, but that the historian, by a judicious management of light and shade, may whiten the one and blacken the other. Whatever may be the errors with which I can be charged, however, I do no think that I have incurred the reproach of partiality. I have drawn my royal personages with their good and evil traits, without either extenuation or exaggeration.

The present volume, though forming the first of a series, may be considered as a complete work of itself, since it embraces all the sovereigns of Aragon and Castile down to the period when those two kingdoms were united by the marriage of their respective Princes, Isabel and Ferdinand.

I have not thought it necessary to quote in notes each and every author whom I have consulted, but will refer the curious reader to the following list of the writers from whose pages I have chiefly drawn my materials:

Mariana, Historia de España; Garibay, Compendio Historical; Zurita, Annales de Aragon Abarca, Reyes de Aragon; Florez, Reinas Catolicas; Cronica General; Cronica de Alfonso Onceno; Ayala, Cronica de Don Pedro, de Enrique II., de Juan I., y de Enrique III.; Guzman, Cronica de Juan II.; Castillo, Cronica de Enrique IV.; Conde de la Roca, Don Pedro Defendido; Quintaña, Vidas de Espanoles celebres; Gandara, Apuntes sobre el bien y el mal de España; Clemencia, Memorias de la Real Academica; Pulgar, Reyes Catolicas.

I have consulted every work that could be of service to me and have rejected no authority worthy of credit. For many of these references I have been indebted to the courtesy of Mr. William H. Prescott and Mr. George

Ticknor of Boston, who kindly allowed me the use of their valuable and extensive libraries, and to whom I take this opportunity of tendering my acknowledgments. My warmest thanks are also due to my friend Mr. J. T. Headley, whose efficient kindness in procuring for me both materials and encouragement amid the difficulties which such an undertaking presented, has greatly assisted me in its accomplishment.

INTRODUCTION.

Of all the barbarous nations which, issuing from the sterile and densely-peopled north overran the more fertile regions of the south, the Goths alone succeeded in effecting a lasting settlement in Spain. After proving, under Alaric, the scourge and terror of Italy, this warlike people under Atantfus, brother-in-law of that chieftain, possessed themselves in 415 of the country lying between the Pyrenean mountains, choosing Narbonne as their capital. In the following year they passed over into Spain, from whence having driven forth and subdued the Vandals, Alans, Suevians, and Stiligians, they finally expelled the Romans, establishing a sovereignty that lasted upwards of three hundred years, and ended with the defeat and death in 714 of Roderic, the last of the Gothic Kings.

Although constantly distracted by internal divisions, the Goths, from the time of their first settlement in Spain, rapidly enlarged their possessions, and in the year 467 were possessed of Betica and Catalonia. The Suevians under Remismondas were masters of Galicia and part of Lusitania, and the remainder of Spain still obeyed the

sway of the Romans. Euricus, then King of the Goths, having made peace with Leo, Emperor of the East, after overrunning all Spain to its farthest extremity and subduing Lusitania, sent part of his forces to take possession of Pamplona and Saragossa, while he himself, with the remainder, marched towards Hispana Citerior; the famous city of Tarragona holding out against a long siege, he levelled it to the ground. This was the last of the Roman empire in Spain, after it had lasted nearly seven hundred years; and all the country, with the exception of Galicia, still held by the Suevians, fell under the dominion of the Goths. Not content with his success in Spain, Euricus, taking advantage of the anarchy and confusion into which the Roman provinces had fallen, passed over to France, and having united his forces with those of the Ostrogoths under Vinde, extended his empire over a considerable portion of that country. His successors, however, were unable to keep these conquests. The Goths being Arrians, and the Franks under their King Clovis, having embraced the Catholic creed, this difference in religion was, during the reign of Alaricus, the son of Euricus, the occasion of long and bloody wars between the two nations. The Franks proving repeatedly victorious, the Goths lost nearly all their possessions in France, Alaricus himself being slain in a battle fought in Poictiers in the year 508. Alaricus was the first King of the Goths who made use of written laws, these laws having been added to try the succeeding sovereigns, from the code known as the Forum Judicum, or Fuerro Jazzo.

From the reign of the first King of the Goths to that of the last, during a period of three centuries, thirty-three sovereigns sat on the Spanish throne, but during these three centuries the Goths wofully degenerated from their

original energy and indomitable valour. Though frequently torn by civil wars, the nation was not for a long space of time called to contend with foreign foes. The ancient ferocity of the worshippers of Odin had become gradually tamed by the spirit of Christianity, and the strength of the descendants of the sons of the north enervated by the genial climate and luxurious soil of this Garden of Eden. Weakened by a famine and divided by factions, Spain presented an easy prey to the Saracens, who invaded it in 714. But the ancient spirit of the Goths, though dormant, was not extinguished, and two years after the first entrance of the Moors, the former commenced that long series of struggles for the redemption of their country from the yoke of the Infidels, which, protracted for centuries, ended with the final expulsion of the latter in 1422.

These incessant wars with a nation skilled in the science of arms, restored their ancient energy to the Spaniards, while they also acquired from their learned as well as chivalrous foes, the polite arts of refined civilization. Though divided into several kingdoms, and almost constantly at war, the strength the Spaniards could muster is almost incredible, and contrasts strangely with their resources at the present day. The Castiles alone could easily furnish forty thousand horse, and until the reign of Juan II., no Andalusians fought in the armies of their sovereigns. Alfonso VIII., King of the two Castiles, alone gained the famous victory of Las Navas at the head of 40,000 Castilian horse and 130,000 infantry. He had also 60,000 baggage waggons, that required at least 140,000 draft horses. It is doubtful whether the Castiles of the present day could furnish one-third of this number of men and horses. Spain continued to increase in power and splen-

dour until the riches of the New World, destroying its energy and industry, caused that decline in her prosperity which has reduced her to a secondary rank among nations.

But the past affords too good a foundation for sanguine hopes of the future, to allow us to doubt that she will retrieve much of what she has lost. Spain contains within herself those elements of prosperity which the majority of other nations are forced to seek among their neighbours. Her fertile soil produces every necessary of life, every luxury of civilization. Her sons, whose bravery, industry, and sobriety once set examples to the world, have not degenerated from their ancient virtues, and the nation that was first to check the victorious career of the till then unconquered Corsican, cannot yet have fallen so low but that she may once more soar to her former glorious height.

INTRODUCTION

BY

THE EDITOR.

The study of History can be but imperfectly understood unless due attention is bestowed upon biography. Even in our own times, when society is so nearly reduced to a dead level that individual peculiarities are daily less and less prominent, the lives of distinguished persons would almost form a history of the period; and, if such be the case at present, how much more strikingly must the same species of writing assist in the perfect comprehension of those earlier eras when knowledge was so restricted, and the means of communication so defective, that all individuals raised above the common rank, either by social position or intellectual greatness, acted powerfully and immediately upon the minds of those with whom they came into contact, and moulded almost at their will the views and intelligence of a nation.

The annals of the Middle Ages, as we possess them,

scarcely consist of more than the lives of the several reigning Princes; and their wars, their intrigues, their domestic discords, the cabals of their Courts, and the adventures of their favourites, form the staple of those bulky tomes which are dignified with the name of History. It unfortunately happens also that these materials, offering, as they undoubtedly do, a wide sweep for investigation and analysis, are regarded almost wholly under a political aspect; and that thus, although they might have been made instrumental in disseminating much knowledge of domestic life and of national manners, the opportunity is lost, and the information so much desired and so desirable is not afforded. Of the people, their modes of life and habits of thinking, their studies and amusements—of the gradations of society, and the state of separation or of fusion, more or less complete, in which it existed—of all these, we learn little or nothing; the annalist passes them over as foreign to his purpose, while the historian, until of late years, treated them as undeserving of his notice. A distinguished writer has, nevertheless, truly said that these are, when efficiently handled, the framework of the historical picture, the setting of the gem; but it would have been still more correct to reverse the similitude, by designating the moral, social, and ever-progressing life of a people, the picture and the gem; and treating wars, revolutions, cabals, and all the historical accessories as the framing or the setting.

That, however, which the more dignified writer neglected as unworthy of his intellectual mission, the less fastidious biographer embalmed and immortalised, when he carried us from the council-chamber to the domestic circle, and showed us the hero at his own hearth as well as on the field. All who are aware of the different effect produced upon the mind by reading history, after having previously become personally acquainted with the characters, sympathies, and habits of those who (as Napoleon profoundly said) "make history," from that evolved without such assistance, cannot fail to attach a high value to authentic biography. They will regard it as furnishing colour and consistency to the picture, by enabling us to deal, as it were, with living and breathing men, and not with mere abstractions, or with still less interesting automata. Thus, even should the task be but imperfectly performed, or the information be scanty and ill-digested; should it be devoid of the graces of style, and given without tact or judgment, they will still welcome the biographer as an essential auxiliary to the complete comprehension of the period; its prejudices, its peculiarities, and its political struggles.

These suggestions naturally arise in the mind on considering a Work like that now presented to the English reader; and they derive additional importance from the nature of the subject. Of all the kingdoms of Europe, Spain, though by no means the least attractive, is